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March 12, 2008

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[The bill](#) Rep. Melancon introduced designates Crewboat Cut as a federally authorized waterway, making it a viable route for commercial vessels traveling to the Gulf. Vessels taking Crewboat Cut could reduce their travel time to the Gulf by 25 minutes or more and also save in fuel costs. Mariners are currently forced to navigate Horseshoe Bend, a curved stretch of water susceptible to uneven currents and silt deposit that has required consistent dredging by the Army Corps at a cost of \$20 million over the last 10 years. By authorizing Crewboat Cut, this legislation may be able to substantially reduce the amount of dredging necessary by the Army Corps and could result in an annual savings of \$2-3 million by the federal government. Senator Mary Landrieu (D-La.) has introduced companion legislation in the U.S. Senate.

**"Authorizing Crewboat Cut is a common sense measure that will benefit mariners in south Louisiana by providing a faster, more efficient access route to the Gulf," Rep. Melancon said. "This legislation could potentially free up millions in federal dollars that could be spent on other dredging projects, while also cutting travel time and costs for businesses that rely on the Atchafalaya River to move goods. Authorizing Crewboat Cut makes sense all around."**

Crewboat Cut is a vital waterway for mariners along the Atchafalaya River but was passed over for dredging in a study by the Army Corps in 1994 in favor of Horseshoe Bend. If dredging is authorized at Crewboat Cut, the self-scouring nature of the waterway could mean less dredging would be necessary in the future. The 500,000 to 1,500,000 cubic yards of shoal expected to be removed from the Cut would be deposited at a disposal area along the southern end of Horseshoe Bend. The Army Corps' Vicksburg District Office would conduct the necessary Environmental Assessment of the impact of the dredging.

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